

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OEXC, PROP, UR, US

SUBJECT: SOVIET MEDIA COVERAGE OF AGRICULTURE USA EXHIBIT

REF:(A) MOSCOW 13083 (B) MOSCOW 12768

1. DEPARTMENT AND ICA ARE CONCERNED BY CONTINUING SOVIET MEDIA TREATMENT OF EXHIBIT GUIDE AFFAIR AND SOVIET USE OF STORY AS PEG FOR GENERAL ATTACKS ON AGRICULTURE USA EXHIBIT. WE CONCUR WITH EMBASSY'S ASSESSMENT IN REF A THAT INTENT OF ARTICLES CITED IN THAT CABLE AS WELL AS THAT OF "VREMYA" TV NEWSCAST REF B IS TO DISCREDIT EXHIBIT FOR FUTURE VIEWING CITIES.

2. THOSE ASPECTS OF SOVIET MEDIA CAMPAIGN WHICH ATTACK THE EXHIBIT ITSELF AND OUR EXCHANGE PROGRAMS ARE
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DISTURBING. WE BELIEVE A PROTEST IS CALLED FOR, BUT WOULD NOT WISH TO PROVOKE A FURTHER SPATE OF ATTACKS UNNECESSARILY IF IT APPEARS SOVIETS HAVE SHOT THEIR BOLT. IF MEDIA CAMPAIGN CONTINUES, REQUEST EMBASSY REPORT AND GIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR US ACTION. OTHERWISE WE RELY ON EMBASSY'S JUDGEMENT FOR TIMING AND LEVEL OF COMPLAINT ON THIS MATTER. AT ITS DISCRETION, EMBASSY SHOULD MAKE

REPRESENTATION TO MFA ALONG FOLLOWING LINES: WE CONTINUE

TO TAKE ISSUE WITH THE SOVIETS PRESENTATION OF THE BASIC FACTS IN THE CASE OF THE TWO GUIDES. WE ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT SOVIET'S HAVE CHOSEN NOT ONLY TO DISTORT FACTS IN THE CASE, BUT FURTHER THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT HAS CHOSEN TO USE THEIR DISTORTED VERSION AS AN EXCUSE TO DISCREDIT AGRICULTURE USA IN A NATIONWIDE MEDIA CAMPAIGN. THIS CLEAR ATTEMPT TO DISCREDIT A PROGRAM OF THE US-USSR EXCHANGE AGREEMENT FOR THE DURATION OF STAY IN USSR IS UNPRECEDENTED. IT TAKES PLACE AT A TIME WHEN USG IS MAKING A GOOD FAITH EFFORT TO ASSIST THE SOVIETS IN FINDING APPROPRIATE SHOWING SITES FOR THEIR OWN EXHIBITS "SOVIET WOMEN" AND "SOVIET SPORT". WE TRUST THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS TO ASSURE THAT THIS CRUDE CAMPAIGN AGAINST AGRICULTURE USA CEASES WITHOUT RESUMPTION.

3. NEW SUBJECT. PRESUME GUIDES ARE STILL TRAVELING IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY DURING THEIR BREAK, AND HAVE NOT BEEN TOGETHER SINCE BEFORE MASCHINOCCHI LEFT COUNTRY. TRUST EMBASSY PLANNING TO FULLY BRIEF THE GUIDES ON FACTS IN CASE AND PROVIDE GUIDANCE FOR FUTURE ACTIONS. WOULD ALSO SUGGEST, IF NOT ALREADY POLICY, THAT STAFF GET TOGETHER REGULARLY AS A GROUP DURING SHOWING PERIODS TO COMPARE NOTES AND DISCUSS THE GENERAL TENOR OF VISITOR'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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QUESTIONS, ANY UNUSUAL INCIDENTS ETC. THIS SEEMS USEFUL WAY TO SPOTLIGHT WHETHER ANY PARTICULAR GUIDE IS BEING SINGLED OUT FOR PROVOCATIVE LINES OF QUESTIONS. IF SUCH FACT DOES EMERGE, BELIEVE THAT MAY BE THE TIME TO CALL IT TO THE ATTENTION OF CHAMBER OFFICIALS THAT GUIDES ARE EXPERIENCING PROBLEMS AND THAT WE WANT IT STOPPED IMMEDIATELY. ICA AND STATE WILL WELCOME PERIODIC CABLED REPORTS ON PROGRESS OF EXHIBIT; PARTICULARLY DURING NEXT SHOWING.

4. MASCHIOCCHI ARRIVED SAFELY IN WASHINGTON. VANCE

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